

An Angry Ending!?

Jonah 4

Jonah most Unexpected Ending of any Book in the Bible

Best Known part is FISH > mix Pinocchio/Whale? / some claim it is Make-Believe?

Few know Sailors Jonah met called Upon Living God in Saving Faith

Few know Jonah 2nd chance: Arrived in Nineveh preached CITY Saved!

Assyria Greatest POWER of World > Most CRUEL & Most VIOLENT

Conversion Shock? > Skeptical? > Like Stopping Shooting in Chicago?

Jesus taught Story was REAL > Claimed as Real as His Resurr from Dead

Nineveh – Saved from Wrath of God / Spared by God’s Compassion

Most preachers would give their right arms to see what Jonah saw in Nineveh...the privilege of being an instrument of awakening in the hands of God would be sweeter than life itself.
Sinclair Ferguson

How we’d Rejoice to See our Kings/Countries > Forgiven & Set Free

1. Case of Anger

END of Chapter 3 > GOD is FILLED with COMPASSION and MERCY BEGINNING of Chapter 4 > JONAH is FILLED with BITTER ANGER

v. 1 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry.

a. Self-Justification Like US, Jonah makes Clear, Not my Problem!

Story Full Circle – back to God & Jonah /

BEGINS – God & Jonah Add Sailors, Fish, Ninevites / END – God & Jonah –

STORY OF OUR LIVES – End – We’ll be Alone before God

Jonah tried to JUSTIFY HIMSELF in eyes of God and Self

v. 2 That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish...

TOO OFTEN OFFER EXCUSES FOR OUR FAILURES

// Adam in Eden “It wasn’t ME!!” – Was You GOD & THIS Woman!

Becoming Xtian NOT Finished @ START > Life-long Process

b. Scripture Twisting Jonah used God’s Word against God Himself

v. 2 ... for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.

Jonah quotes Bible back to God to Prove that God is WRONG

Jonah is Consistent / God is Erratic > So Jonah Thinks

Satan quote Bible to Jesus: Right Texts, Wrong Context > Pretext

Possible to Make Bible say Whatever you Want > Scripture TWISTING

c. Suicide instead of Service

Reprise of Ch. 1 – tells Sailors throw him into Sea

Default Settings on Computer – We Do Same DUMB Thing Over & Over

“Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me!”
Psalm 19.13

Presumptuous / Besetting Sins – Bad Habits Hard to Break

Jonah AGAIN ASKED FOR DEATH - v. 3 “Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.”

Notice it is a PRAYER > THAT is Good Thing > Looking to GOD

v. 9 “Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die.”

Jonah Outward Obedience - SEETHING, INWARD ANGER

Ministry motivated by love will build you up, but ministry motivated only by obligation or duty can produce hidden anger and eventually wear you down Warren Wiersbe

Many Xtians Anger just Below Surface / Out: Smiling / In: Seething
Shoe Lace Breaks when Going OUT Door > Nuclear MELTDOWN!
Danger of GRUMBLING at Petty Annoyances > **CASE of Anger!**

2. Cause of Anger

a. Insists on Own Way -- No Acceptance of God’s Will

He did what God wanted / God did not do what he wanted

Jonah Not RECONCILED with the WILL OF GOD

REASON FOR MANY MISERABLE, BITTER CHRISTIANS

God Failed them > WRONG Life, Marriage, Kids, Job, Health

Joy of the Lord is our Strength – Contentment > Gives Confidence

GET Things, Jobs, Pleasures: **Blessings!** Only God brings Real JOY

b. Ignored God's Mercy Forgotten God's Mercy to him!

Saved from Suicide & Stubbornness, Swallowed by God's FISH

Safe on Long Journey from Mediterranean > walled city of Nineveh

Mt 18 – Servant Forgiven millions of dollars by Great King

Finds fellow Servant who Owes him CHUMP CHANGE

Received HUGE Forgiveness > REFUSES to Forgive Humble Amount

King angrily says to this unmerciful servant – “You should have had mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you”
Matthew 18.33

Have we forgotten God's Mighty Deliverance – Jesus upon Cross?

ANGRY Believer = MERCILESS Believer > Short Memory of MERCY

c. Ignorance of God - NOT Know God as Well as he Thought Proud

Jew: Revelation Only True God – TORAH – Law of Moses

v. 2 “for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful” BAD Thing?

Forgiveness & Grace for NINEVITES? Isn't this Monopoly of Jews??

2.8 Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love > What Jonah Did!

He was shaped by the God of Imagination Not just True Revelation!

Knew Many Things about God > Not God's Heart for All NATIONS

Like Older Brother – Luke 15: Sulked as Father Loved Prodigal Brother

Jonah was caught between the vice of his own self-will on the one hand, and the strong hand of God on the other. The more he pushed, the more God pressed. He was bound to remain miserable until either he or God let go.
Sinclair Ferguson

Nineveh – Great Revival / Jonah – Great Evangelist > Not MOST Impt.

Is Name WRITTEN in GOD'S BOOK of Everlasting LIFE?

1. Case of Anger 2. Cause for Anger >> 3. Cure for Anger

Not fully solvable in this life BUT can Begin Now to Grow in X's Love

a. Right Perspective – Ultimate Truth

God asks Calm Questions > Seen OFTEN thru Scriptures...

To Adam & Eve – Guilty in Court Room of Eden –

“Where are you?”/“Who told you that you were naked?” Gen 3.9,11

To Cain whose Brother's Blood was on his Hands -

“Where is Abel your brother?” Genesis 4.9

To Judas Iscariot who Sold Out our Lord -

“Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?” Luke 22.48

ANSWERS REVEAL WHERE WE STAND BEFORE A HOLY GOD

God KNOWS Answer making SURE We Know – Speak out the TRUTH

First Question to Jonah – v. 4 “Do you do well to be angry?”

PERSPECTIVE – Who is Right? – Angry Prophet or Awesome God

2 OPPOSITE OPINIONS - God is Pleased, Jonah is Angry Whatever our

Thoughts or Feelings – GOD IS RIGHT!

PAUL “Let God be true, and every man a liar” Romans 3.4

Jonah SO ANGRY – Ignores God – WALKS OUT OF CITY

God's 2nd Quest to Jonah v 9 “Do you do well to be angry for the plant?”

Only Time Jonah HAPPY in Book

v. 6 “Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant”

NOT ABOUT Sailors Conversion, Big Fish, Salvation of Nineveh “Jonah was very happy about the SHADE GIVING Vine”

GOD Sent HOT SIROCCO Wind in FROM the DESERT

Now Jonah ANGRY about SHRIVELED VINE – Enough to Die!!

HEBREW Word for ANGRY Used Here – Lit. = GET HOT!

Now Not Angry at GOD – ANGRY at WORM – PETTINESS

God's sovereignty is not restricted to acts of compassion. As one who gives life, he also has the right to bring it to an end... symbolizes the future destruction of Israel by these Assyrians.
Desmond Alexander

b. Right Power – Ultimate Authority

1.4 “the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea” - We Cheer and Marvel

1.17 “the LORD appointed a great fish” – We Praise His Great Power

4.6 “Now the LORD God appointed a plant” – We Agree

4.7 “God provided a worm which chewed the vine” – What is this?

4.8 “God appointed a scorching east wind” How good God do that?

If God is Sovereign – ABSOLUTE POWER & AUTHORITY

EVERYTHING COMES FROM HIS HAND

We GLADLY Receive the Obvious Blessings of our Life

But We Question – Even Curse – Apparent CONTRADICTIONS

God gives Children / how about Barrenness?

God gives Safe Travel / how about Plane Crashes?

God gives Health / how about Sickness?

God gives Food / how about Starvation?

God gives Life / how about Death?

PREACHERS in USA After September 11, 2001

“God had Nothing to Do with Falling of World Trade TOWERS!” Suppose they HOPED to
COMFORT People and DEFEND God

Do the Difficult Things – COME FROM SATAN?

If World HALF-Controlled by Satan Really is SCARRY PLACE!

Does God share His Sovereign Rule to Evil One? – Are there 2 gods!

If One is Creator – other Must Be a MERE CREATURE

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. Romans 8.28

give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you
1 Thessalonians 5.18

“be thankful IN all circumstances” – NOT FOR Them

Many Terrible Circumstances: Cancers, Crashes, Starvation, Death

If Believe in SOVEREIGN GOD – “even in greatest tragedy

God Working, for GOOD of His People, and GLORY of His Name”

Joseph’s bro’s Sold to Slavery > Many Wasted, Painful Years LOST!

“You meant these things for evil, but God intended them for good, and the saving of many people”
Genesis 50.20

“The LORD has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble.”
Proverbs 16.4

APOSTLE PAUL TO ROMANS “Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God’s kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness” Romans 11.22

c.Right People – Need for Community

Why Living in SHELTER? – Every House in Nineveh OPEN

Thanks to Jonah DODGED the Bullet > Saved from Storm of Wrath

Should be like John Calvin – taught Scripture to city of Geneva

Jonah had a “Pity Party” – Only Guest INVITED was HIMSELF

Seething w Anger – Camped on Hillside to Watch City BURN

Addicted to Anger, Pride, Bitterness, Self-Importance

Christians make New Churches / Denom. Cannot GET Along!

Being Spectator, not a Servant makes One Overly Critical – Angry

Numerous Studies since 1930’s SAME Conclusion:

The opposite of addiction is not sobriety, it is community... There is an abundance of proof that community and connection drive recovery in many different ways... The opposite of addiction is community.

d.Right Purpose – Ultimate Love - GOD’S 3rd & Final Quest.

v. 11 “should not I pity Nineveh, great city... more 120,000 who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?”

Children Most Vulnerable > Movie: “God’s Children Not for Sale!”

Parents going to School Board Mtgs “Leave Our Kids Alone!

God Looking for CRACK in Jonah’s Hard Heart – Kids? Animals? Should they ALL Burn?

Jonah Sorry for Wilted Plant but NOT Sorry for Weary PEOPLE!

BOOK ENDS WITH THIS QUESTION --- No Written Answer
Question Echoes Down Corridors of Time Right into this ROOM!

Question that God wants YOU and I to Answer

NOT KNOW when will be LAST TIME God will SPEAK to US

We DO WELL to ASSUME this IS the LAST TIME and be READY! Book of Jonah –

Picture of Every Believer – in Israel and Church

Do we care more about the items in our gardens...or perhaps the contents of our garage, or home, than we do about other men and women and the spread of the gospel to them? Do we care more, in the last analysis, about our own comforts and plans than about the evangelism of the world in our time? The statistics of our giving, or praying, or going in the cause of Christ throughout the earth provide embarrassing reading to the church...If God is concerned, can we remain unconcerned?
Sinclair Ferguson

Moments of Victory – Moments of Shame – God’s Mercy will Find Us

Shocking Discovery – Found Problem > Not God > HE is Solution!

Book – Most Importantly – Picture of God > VERY BIG GOD

La Salle St. Chicago/Church Crucifix on Wall – 1000’s see Inscription -

“Is it nothing to you, all who pass by? Look around and see. Is any suffering like my suffering that was inflicted on me, that the Lord brought on me in the day of his fierce anger?”

Lamentations 1.12

“Should I not be concerned about great city?” Nineveh, Chicago, BJ?

We look to God – Jonah Describes as – “slow to anger” 4.2

May we find Grace xchgng Anger for Adoration / Selfishness to Service

Jonah 4:1 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. 2 And he prayed to the LORD and said, “O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. 3 Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.” 4 And the LORD said, “Do you do well to be angry?” 5 Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city. 6 Now the LORD God appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant. 7 But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, so that it withered. 8 When the sun rose, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint. And he asked that he might die and said, “It is better for me to die than to live.” 9 But God said to Jonah, “Do you do well to be angry for the plant?” And he said, “Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die.” 10 And the LORD said, “You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. 11 And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?”

God, you ask, “Do you do well to be angry?” And many hurts, pains, wrongs, and injustices – some against us, some against those we love – pass into our minds. These must be someone’s fault. Lots of voices, sometimes our own, says it is You!

Again you ask your servants, “Do you do well to be angry?” This time it is about loss – earthly treasures, loved ones, shiny objects. God, why did you take them away?

Jesus said, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.” (Matthew 12)

Moment of Silent Prayer and Reflection

“The Lord passed before Moses and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.” And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped.” (Exodus 34)

Lord, we confess You are a God of might, and mystery, and mercy. You are Sovereign. You send storms, You provide shelter, even by growing plants, and You accomplish deliverance – even by a fish! You send the worm, and our dreams shrivel. Lord, give us humility, wisdom, and courage – even in the face of pain and sorrow. Pity us Lord, even as you extended mercy

to Nineveh. Send us, even with all our unanswered questions, to serve you from here to the ends of the earth. In Jesus Name.